



M. Jodi Rell

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of
Governor M. Jodi Rell**

Presented to the General Law Committee

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

**Regarding Governor's Bill No. 838
An Act Concerning Consumer Privacy and Identity Theft**

Over the last few years, it has been a goal of my administration to increase the protection afforded Connecticut residents over their personal information. To this end, in September 2005, I established the Governor's Identity Theft Advisory Board. The Identity Theft Advisory Board harnessed the expertise from many State agencies and organizations on the issue, including the Departments of Banking and Consumer Protection, Offices of the Chief State's Attorney and Victim Advocate, and Connecticut Business & Industry Association. In January 2006, the Board issued its recommendations which served as the basis for my proposed legislation in the 2008 session, and once again, as the basis for my proposal this session.

Regrettably, we can all think of many recent events in Connecticut as evidence of identity theft's pervasiveness. Identity theft takes on many forms - from dumpster diving to old-fashioned stealing of wallets and bank statements. Perhaps most troubling is how the information obtained is used to facilitate other crimes, such as credit fraud, phone or utilities fraud, and bank fraud. Furthermore, significant technological advances in recent years have increased the ability of people to commit sophisticated crimes such as identity theft.

I applaud the efforts of the Legislature last year in laying the foundation for privacy protection and identity theft prevention with the passage of Public Act 08-167. But more must be done. I ask for your help in addressing this increasingly troubling problem.

The consumer protections, regulatory oversight and enhanced penalties proposed in this bill will go a long way toward deterrence of future identity theft cases in Connecticut. Among other protections, this identity theft legislation will upgrade the crime of criminal impersonation, require full restitution from those convicted of identity theft and make it illegal to own equipment used in identity theft.

I urge the committee's passage of Governor's Bill 838. With these additional tools to safeguard consumer information and penalize violators, I am confident that we will reduce the occurrence of identity theft in Connecticut.